



# **ATLANTA FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

## **DOCTRINE**

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## Introduction

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department (AFRD) Doctrine shall serve as the foundation for all actions and decisions made by the organization and its personnel. This doctrine will serve as the framework of how others will view us and as a mirror of how we view ourselves. It will represent the organizational purpose, philosophy, and commitment plan of the AFRD. This communication shall depict our vision, mission and values and their influence on our organizational goals, objectives and strategic plan.

## Purpose

The Vision: ***“Atlanta Fire Rescue strives for excellence in emergency preparedness and response, to enhance our customer-focused, innovative role as industry leaders, while overcoming expanding risks.”*** Our vision statement is the focal point of the department. Through continuous environmental scanning, we will analyze trends, programs, and services to provide to our external and internal customers.

The Mission: ***“Atlanta Fire Rescue shall provide prompt quality services to our stakeholders that promotes safety, security, enhances sustainability, and enriches quality of life through professional development and dedication to service.”*** Our mission statement is our roadmap. We exist as an organization to serve the citizens of Atlanta. Ultimately, our customers decide the services we deliver. Our personnel have an obligation to provide those services in the most professional and efficient manner.

## The Doctrine

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department is organized to provide the community with the resources necessary to meet their needs at the highest level of proficiency and quality attainable. Responsive, quality public safety services provided by committed AFR personnel build community equity, which determines the degree of trust that stakeholders have in leadership to make decisions in their best interest. We will continue to become more intimately involved with our customers by establishing stronger relationships, through meaningful interaction beyond emergency response. We will always listen to their needs and develop a reputation of responsiveness. The Department will be marketed as a model for all-hazard response and other community

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services.

AFRD will provide diverse programs to meet the personal fulfillment and professional development needs of its personnel. Efforts to provide motivation and incentives for

participation will strengthen morale, self-worth, and individual confidence in supporting the department's vision and mission.

*Organizational Core Values* determine our image. The image of the department is exemplified by each individual. Our collective professionalism is the integrity of our organization. *Membership* within AFRD means that each person must value the personal needs and aspirations of others and recognize the following needs:

- A. Preserving **integrity** through respect, honesty and personal honor of its members
- B. Maintaining **competence**, including the professional and personal development of one's ability to improve their working and living conditions
- C. Providing best in class services that meet and exceed industry standards for **excellence**
- D. Enhancing **predictability** through properly derived, regularly reviewed and equally enforced departmental controls
- E. Providing an atmosphere that encourages **honesty**, camaraderie, and high regard for the common good of all
- F. Providing an **ism-free** climate devoid of racism, sexism, favoritism, nepotism and territorialism
- G. Embracing **accountability** to ensure that all members contribute to organizational success

Each individual can and will make a difference. Every employee is expected to accomplish their own tasks with a sense of duty, respect, and honor to the department and their fellow employees as it pertains to the organizational vision, mission, and core values.

Teamwork is expected and all personnel are part of the team. By working in teams, with effective communication, we strive to maximize our capabilities: thus allowing us to provide quality service to each other and fulfill expectations. Quality improvement can only be achieved when it is the goal of all personnel. Active participation and support by all AFRD employees is essential to the successful pursuit of our vision and the successful accomplishment of our mission.

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department provides an exciting, challenging, and rewarding work environment. Leadership has an obligation to insure employees have the facilities,

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equipment, and training needed to accomplish the mission of the department. This provides the foundation for personal and professional growth. The primary responsibility for personal growth rests with each employee. Additional opportunities exist for those who are motivated, and whose personal goals are in-line with the AFRD

Doctrine. Each person shall be empowered to take action supported by these principles, as long as those actions are reported through proper channels with respect to departmental divisions of labor.

### Decision Making Priorities

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department decision-making culture, built on the acceptance of a mission-driven process, is to be considered and used to evaluate decisions. All decisions made by AFRD leaders and personnel should directly or indirectly benefit the **citizens** of Atlanta. Considered next is the needs and benefits to the **department** as a whole. **Divisions** of labor should make decisions aligned with the needs of the department and citizens, but also must consider the impact of their decision on other divisions of labor. Decisions, which benefit one division of labor, should not have an adverse effect on another division.

There are many **groups** within the AFRD. All groups are important. Decisions made to benefit one group will also be applicable to other groups that are similarly situated. **Individual** needs are also very important. Decisions made to benefit an individual will be applicable to individuals similarly situated and who make the same request. Decisions made based on racism, sexism, favoritism, nepotism, and territorialism shall not be tolerated. Lastly, the needs of the leader will be considered. Applying this systematic approach assures mission driven decisions derived from mission driven motives.

- ▶ **Citizens**
- ▶ **Departments**
- ▶ **Division(s)**
- ▶ **Groups**
- ▶ **Individual(s)**
- ▶ **Leader**

### Leadership Culture

All AFRD leaders will be **predictable** by establishing expectations in accordance with departmental controls and by consistently modeling those expectations. Being **visible** and engaged in meaningful interactions with personnel fosters good morale. Leaders will also present themselves as **approachable**; where employees feel comfortable

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addressing them with needs and concerns. Leaders will be **accessible** at all levels, creating an atmosphere where employees can be heard. The final piece of the leadership culture is to be **accountable**. Everyone will answer for the results of their actions if not in line with the department's doctrine.

- ▶ Predictable
- ▶ Visible
- ▶ Approachable
- ▶ Accessible
- ▶ Accountable

### **Organizational Priorities**

The greatest obligation of the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department is emergency response. When our customers call, we answer. The AFRD will continue to implement programs, activities, and services purposed around the premise of emergency response. A structured budget shall support our emergency services needs. Activities related to training, maintenance, fire prevention, communications, safety, human resources, and support services comprise a strategic approach to the overall organizational priorities. A lack of understanding of the departments priorities and their relativity to the department's mission can lead to frustration or apathy among elected, appointed, and community leadership, as well as fire personnel. To minimize a lack of understanding the strategic approach to accomplish our vision and mission includes:

- I. Human Resource Management**
- II. Professional Development**
- III. Emergency Preparedness and Response**
- IV. Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Technology**
- V. Customer Service Programs**
- VI. Public Information, Education, and Relations**

A literal approach to these priorities is not always practical. Continuous assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats will dictate emphasis in specific financial and strategic planning. Understanding the principles outlined in the ***Atlanta Fire Rescue Department Doctrine*** should offer clarity in this area.

It is an absolute priority to deliver the highest quality service attainable in the most cost-effective manner. The leadership will evaluate every operation in the department and ensure that each makes the best use of appropriated funds. Where there is inefficiency or duplication, changes will be made to make better use of resources. Value-added service, or getting more use out of current resources for the benefit of the customer, will be the purpose of this initiative.

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How can the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department Doctrine be utilized as a guideline for organizational priorities? This is accomplished by providing departmental direction, establishing and attaining our stated goals and objectives. The Atlanta Fire Rescue

Department is not a private business selling a product for a profit; however, we do merchandise human services and resources, which make the human aspect a first priority. Everything we do will be measured against our Doctrine.

Our strategic approach addresses the following:

### **I. Human Resource Management Programs**

- A. Recruit the most qualified persons for employment
- B. Employ enough personnel for adequate staffing
- C. Provide wellness programs consistent with the IAFC/IAFF Wellness Fitness Initiative
- D. Address employee concerns promptly and in good faith
- E. Promote good faith labor/management relations
- F. Assure personnel safety
- G. Establish human resource programs and services that meet the needs of personnel
- H. Improve internal communication processes
- I. Improve personnel assignment processes

Personnel must have faith in the leadership to guide their efforts to a successful outcome. They must trust in the judgment and actions of other personnel. In addition, one must be able to count on their partners to back them even when faced with the risk of making the supreme sacrifice. It is the knowledge of our own uniquely heroic character which produces faith and trust in each other and causes us to place high value on our personal integrity, honor, and respect. When we neglect that duty, we fail our residents, damage our image, and become a liability to our city government.

### **II. Professional Development**

- A. Develop training programs for officer training, supervision, management, planning skills appropriate to each rank
- B. Enhance emergency management with regard to the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS); pre-incident planning and post-incident analysis
- C. Enhance emergency operations efficiency in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards and

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- departmental standard operating guidelines and protocols
- D. Enhance driver training adaptive to all emergency response vehicles and their specific functions
- E. Enhance verbal and written communication skills, administrative and technical skills appropriate to each rank
- F. Develop probationary skills assessments with documentation during employee probation periods
- G. Provide training to enhance customer service skills
- H. Create a professional development and succession plan for all ranks

These important measures will ensure that individuals and the department as a whole have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to deliver required services. Company-level training will be strengthened. Our current rate of attrition does not allow the AFRD Fire Academy to keep pace with the leadership and management training needs of the department. Training is our edge against failure. We will strive for excellence. Taking a chance or guessing in an emergency can mean the difference between life and death. Our greatest assurance for optimum performance on the emergency scene is training. Our greatest defense against injuries and line-of-duty deaths is training. We will make and take the time to be sharp.

### **III. Emergency Preparedness and Response**

- A. Enhance Homeland Security Initiatives
- B. Conduct a formal Community Risk Assessment and Resource Capability Assessment
- C. Revise the Integrated Emergency Response Plan to comply with the results of the assessments
- D. Provide technical and logistical support services
- E. Strengthen the Pre-Incident Fire Survey Program
- F. Reduce the Inspector/building ratio to improve program efficiency
- G. Develop a company-level inspection program
- H. Evaluate Standards of Response Coverage on an ongoing basis

Community risk assessments and resource capability assessments identify and rank potential emergencies and disasters, determine resources available at the local, state, and federal levels. The decision will be made at the local level as to whether local resource capabilities meet the homeland security landscape. Strategic and operational plans should focus on eliminating gaps in these capabilities. The issue is balancing risks versus resources. The question must be posed, "What is the acceptable level of

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risk that our stakeholders are willing to pay for?” This is the time for the entire organization, the community, elected and appointed leadership to become emergency managers.

Standards of response coverage (SORC) are statements that combine service-level objectives with staffing levels to define how and when resources will respond to a call for service. In essence, SORC statements identify criteria for trained personnel and response times needed to effectively mitigate an incident. AFRD identifies these SORC targets and goals for major hazards such as fires, EMS, technical rescue, and hazardous materials incidents. Measuring performance against standards of response coverage allows us to determine if current resources and service objectives effectively address the assessed risks within the City of Atlanta.

An efficient pre-fire survey and inspection program not only secures our property insurance rating, but also increases emergency management efficiency through having prior knowledge of buildings before their involvement in fires. Fire and life safety hazards noticed and corrected during a fire inspection can eliminate a hazard and prevent loss. Through these processes, the overall emergency response needs for the City of Atlanta can be achieved.

### **IV. Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Technology**

- A. Ensure that all emergency equipment used to protect personnel and serve citizens meet OSHA, FAA, DOT, ISO and NFPA standards, Federal, State and Local regulations and protocols
- B. Maintain thorough fire apparatus equipment inspection and testing programs
- C. Provide timely apparatus and equipment maintenance and replacement in accordance with standards and regulations
- D. Maintain an adequate level of supplies for emergency operations and environmental needs of personnel
- E. Maintain fire stations, maintenance garage, fire academy and other fire facilities in an safe and sanitary condition
- F. Test all fire, medical, hazardous material, and rescue equipment in accordance with standards and regulations
- G. Identify and maintain technological resources for administrative and operational functions
- H. Provide timely replacement of technological hardware and software to keep pace with advances in technology as much possible

All equipment used in the delivery of emergency services must be of the highest quality



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and must always perform when needed. Without our equipment, all we have are good intentions. Our equipment is critical to fulfilling our mission. We must know how to properly deploy and use our equipment to give our customers maximum benefit. Most issues relative to facilities, equipment, supplies, and technology can be planned and

scheduled as necessary.

### **V. Customer Service Programs**

- A. Strive to exceed internal and external customer expectations
- B. Develop processes that reduce/eliminate inconveniences to business owners and developers during inspection and plans review initiatives
- C. Identify objectives common to other city departments relative to the public safety needs of our customers and develop cooperative agreements to meet those needs
- D. Establish community partnership programs with organizations that address health and life safety needs of our customers
- E. Implement formal post-emergency programs that provide counseling, shelter, food, clothing and other needs

The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department shall be dedicated to identifying customer needs and then do everything possible to meet those needs. This will not be simply a fad and then fade; it will become an expected level of performance. Anything less is unacceptable to the customer. Serving the community through effective customer service will be an essential part of the fire service. In addition, responding directly to the needs of our stakeholders is the most effective way to gain the support of local elected and appointed leadership. By gaining the trust of stakeholders and decision-makers, the department will be able to propose new programs and needs that are objectively considered. The public will trust the judgment of the department and thus become advocates and change agents.

### **VI. Public Information, Education, and Relations Programs (PIER)**

- A. Establish a comprehensive community education program with a strong focus on injury prevention, heart health, stroke prevention, and management of diabetes
- B. Fine-tune fire prevention and fire survival programs to target children and elderly citizens
- C. Develop community wellness programs in cooperation with local health care systems
- D. Adopt more effective life safety codes

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- E. Use operational personnel to conduct neighborhood education and fire prevention
- F. Develop a more effective relationship with the media
- G. Provide better information to elected and appointed leadership and community leadership
- H. Enhance public education in schools, nursing homes, and independent living communities for the elderly

An informed public is the best way to secure support for fire and emergency services. It is important to look at the relationship of public information, public education, and public relations functions and their role in fire departments, both today and in the future. They are the keys to effective prevention programs and garnering support for our vision.

***Public information is the process of informing the public about the operations of and actions taken by the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department during emergencies.***

The public has a right to know about these operations, and public information ensures public awareness about emergency services provided by the Department.

***Public education is the process of changing people's attitudes and behavior related to safety, as most fires and injuries can be prevented with changed behavior.*** The human element is the primary cause of fires. Most incidents are due to carelessness or inappropriate behavior. Public education seeks to change a person's attitude about his or her personal safety and wellness, resulting in a change in behavior, theoretically lowering the number of fatalities/property loss.

***Public Relations are the processes of developing a positive public perception about the Fire Department, its personnel, programs, and services.*** Public Relations programs encompass methods such as media, public service announcements, newspaper articles, fact sheets, presentations to the public and programs at community events. Collectively, PIER PROGRAMS help decision makers understand that customers are pleased with the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department and support our vision.

## **Conclusion**

The future of the fire service will continue to be driven by changes in society. These changes include new expectations of our stakeholders and fire personnel such as greater accountability for the use of public resources, improving the overall efficiency of programs and services, and true transparency. The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department is

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committed to becoming more diverse, in both personnel and services. To keep pace with society, the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department will continue to review its current mission and determine if that mission indeed meets the demands of the new century.

What will the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department of the 21<sup>st</sup> century look like? It will be a Fire Department filled with opportunities and challenges. We will be prepared to meet them all head on!